

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (cancelled)

1 2. (currently amended) Method according to claim 6.5, further comprising applying
2 the electrical voltage over the pipeline between the electrical contacts until a zone of ice
3 having thickness of at least 5 mm closest to an inner wall of the pipeline melts, such that flow
4 of the fluid through the pipeline is resumed or maintained.

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)

1 5. (currently amended) A method for counteracting plugging by at least ice in a
2 subsea pipeline, which is electrically conductive, exhibits ohmic resistance, and is a conduit
3 for a fluid, comprising
4 directly heating the pipeline electrically to a temperature above the melting point of
5 ice, but below the melting point of a hydrate;
6 applying an electrical voltage over the pipeline between two electrical contacts,
7 thereby causing an electric current to pass through the pipeline to resume or maintain flow of
8 fluid through the pipeline, and
9 subsequent application of a second plug-counteracting procedure to remove any ice or
10 hydrate plug from within the pipeline.

6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

1 8. (currently amended) A method as in claim 7.5, in which the second plug-
2 counteracting procedure is chemical injection.

1 9. (currently amended) A method as in claim 7.5, in which the second plug-
2 counteracting procedure is depressurization.

1 10. (currently amended) A system for direct electric heating of a subsea pipeline,
2 which is electrically conductive, exhibits ohmic resistance, and is a conduit for a fluid
3 hydrocarbon, which pipeline can be blocked by plugs of ice and hydrates, the system
4 comprising:

5 an electrical current source;

6 a support device supporting the current source;

7 a first and a second subsea electrical connector, each in electrical contact with the
8 pipeline

9 a riser cable that extends between the support device and the pipeline, said riser cable
10 comprising a first and a second electrical conductor for conducting electrical current between
11 the current source to a respective one of the subsea electrical connectors, whereby an electric
12 circuit is formed from the electrical current source, through the first electrical conductor, over
13 the first subsea electrical connector, through the pipeline, over the second subsea electrical
14 connector, and through the second electrical conductor back to the current source;

15 in which the electrical current source is provided for generating current sufficient to
16 cause heating of the pipeline to a temperature above the melting point of ice, but below the
17 melting point of a hydrate, such that the permeability through the pipeline is resumed or
18 maintained, and so as to enable a second plug-counteracting procedure for plug removal or
19 hindrance of ice and hydrate plug formation.

1 11. (previously presented) A system as in claim 10, in which the electrical current
2 source is provided for generating current sufficient and until a zone of ice having thickness of
3 at least 5 mm closest to an inner wall of the pipeline melts, such that flow of the fluid through
4 the pipeline is resumed or maintained.

1 12. (currently amended) A system as in claim 10, in which the support device is a
2 surface vessel that is is equipped to extend the riser cable down to the pipeline for connection
3 of the first electrical conductor and a second electrical conductor to the respective first subsea
4 electrical connector and a second subsea electrical connector.

13. (canceled)